

March 8, 2016

Testimony in favor of Paid Family and Medical Leave, SB 221.

To the Labor Committee:

Thank you for holding the hearing on this important bill. I'd like to support legislation for paid family and medical leave.

I grew up in Hartford, and live in Newtown now. In so many ways I have been fortunate, working for employers in my adult life who provide at least some form of paid leave. It gives me peace of mind to know that I can count on something paid FMLA if I get sick or if something were to happen to my family.

This issue means a lot to me. When I was back in college, I got very sick. I had to quit my job at the time. I was in treatment and recovery for about a year. At the time I was living in Puerto Rico where my school was, and fortunately my sister also lived there at the time. I relied heavily on her to take me to treatments and give me support as I was getting well. She managed to make it work with her job – going in most of the week so that she wouldn't get fired, missing a couple days without pay to get me to doctor appointments and help out, and juggling it all. It was incredibly stressful for both of us, and simply unfair that she lost pay for helping me when I needed her most. But I am healthy now and grateful for the support she gave me back then.

This experience informs how I think about my future in Connecticut. My mother still lives in Hartford, and she is getting older. I hope that I will have the paid time I need if ever she gets ill and I need it to be there to take care of her. On the other hand, I just got married about a year and a half ago. We are thinking about starting a family one day, and knowing that we could rely on a paid family program if we did would give us a lot of security.

Connecticut needs to attract and retain younger people like me. Our future and our economy depend upon it. Paid family and medical leave is a huge incentive for younger workers and families to stay here, grow their families here, and plan their futures here.

Please pass this crucial legislation. Thank you.

Eva Bermudez Zimmerman
Newtown